The Virginia Muster of 1624/5 As a Source for Demographic History

Irene W. D. Hecht*

I

Current population problems have aroused keen interest in the mechanisms of demographic growth and in the structure of populations. One consequence of this is that despite the difficulty of gaining historic insight into demographic patterns from documents which were not originally designed for that purpose, students of early American history have begun to trace out the contours of the pre-Revolutionary population. The task is still in its early stage, and more detailed studies are needed before an overall synthesis can be made. Nevertheless, as each new piece is added possibilities for comparison arise. Work done by Peter Laslett on the population of Stuart England furnishes insight into the demographic characteristics of the society from which colonial migration emanated.[1] Portions of the New World context have been established for the New England population by the studies of John Demos, Philip Greven, and Kenneth Lockridge, while Richard Dunn has performed a similar service for Barbados.[2] The existence of a key Virginia document, *The Muster of 1624/5,* makes it possible to fill in more of the

* Ms. Hecht is a member of the Department of History, Lewis and Clark College. During the year 1971-1972 she was a fellow of the Charles Warren Center for American Studies and of the Radcliffe Institute.

[1] Peter Laslett and John Harrison, "Clayworth and Cogenhoe," in H. E. Bell and R. L. Ollard, eds., *Historical Essays 1660-1750: Presented to David Ogg* (New York, 1963), 157-184; Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost* (New York, 1965); Laslett, "The Study of Social Structure from Listings of Inhabitants," in E. A. Wrigley, ed., *An Introduction to English Historical Demography: From the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1966), 160-208.

[2] John Demos, "Families in Colonial Bristol, Rhode Island: An Exercise in His-

colonial picture and to press further some intercolonial comparisons initiated by Dunn.

In the history of North American populations the Virginia *Muster* is a very unusual document. Unlike many of the materials to which demographic historians must resort, the *Muster* was intentionally conceived as an inventory of people and provisions. Executed as a house-to-house survey, the *Muster* constitutes the first comprehensive census made in North America.[3]

The *Muster*[4] was ordered by the crown at the time it took over management from the Virginia Company, which by 1624 had demonstrated its incompetence as a colonizing agency. Intracompany wran-

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torical Demography," *William and Mary Quarterly,* 3d Ser., XXV (1968), 40-57; Philip J. Greven, Jr., "Family Structure in Seventeenth-Century Andover, Massachusetts," *ibid.,* XXIII (1966), 234-256; Greven, *Four Generations: Population, Land, and Family in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts* (Ithaca, 1970); Kenneth Lockridge, "The Population of Dedham, Massachusetts," *Economic History Review,* 2d Ser., XIX (1966), 318-344; Richard S. Dunn, "The Barbados Census of 1680: Profile of the Richest Colony in English America," *WMQ,* 3d Ser., XXVI (1969), 3-30; Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713* (Chapel Hill, 1972).

[3] *A List of Names of the Living and the Dead in Virginia,* compiled in February 1623/4, could also be considered a rudimentary census. However, it is far less useful than the 1624/5 *Muster.* The *List* of 1623/4 was designed purely as a "head-count" of those still alive following the Indian massacre in 1622 and contains only names arranged according to place of residence. It is not possible to tell with any reliability how persons were related or what their ages may have been. See John Camden Hotten, ed., *The Original Lists of Persons of Quality . . . and Others Who Went from Great Britain to the American Plantations 1600-1700* (London, 1874), 169-189.

Historians of French Canada have claimed for New France the honor of making the first modern census in the western world in 1666 and 1667. A. J. Pelletier, "Canadian Censuses of the Seventeenth Century," Canadian Political Science Association, *Papers and Proceedings,* II (1930), 20-34, discusses this issue at length. Without diminishing the importance of the extraordinary French-Canadian census, it should be noted that the Virginia *Muster* of 1624/5 shares key characteristics with the French document insofar as both were the result of a thorough, house-to-house inventory of people and goods. Both, in short, deserve the name "census" in its modern connotation.

[4] The *Muster,* the original of which is now housed in the Public Record Office in London, is available on Virginia Colonial Records Project microfilm and in two modern published editions, Hotten, ed., *Original Lists,* and Annie Lash Jester and Martha Woodruff Hiden, eds., *Adventurers of Purse and Person: Virginia, 1607-1625* (Princeton, 1956). The latter is by far the more reliable version. Hotten's lapses include misreadings of dates and outright omissions. In addition Hotten did not publish the provision lists.

gling, which had been superficially calmed during an administrative reorganization in 1618, reached an unpleasant public peak following the Indian massacre in March 1622 that eradicated approximately a quarter of the colony's population. Ensuing food shortages and an epidemic further reduced the Virginia population and discredited the Company.[5] The disaster had been more than the failure of a private venture; it represented a national debacle as well, since the colonization of Virginia had drawn upon the energy, enthusiasm, money, and people of all segments of English society. However, one positive result for posterity is that the crisis moved the crown to order a detailed inventory of the colony.

The easiest way to describe the arrangement of the *Muster* is by illustration, of which the following entry for Thomas Chapman furnishes a fairly typical example:

The Muster of Thomas Chapman
Thomas Chapman arived in the *Tryall* in 1610
Ann his wife in the *George* 1619
Thomas his sonn aged 2 yeare
Ann theire daughter aged 6 weeks
Provisions:
Corne, 5 bushells
Fish, ½ hundred
Armes and Munitions:
Powder, 1 lb.
Leade, 10 lb.
Peeces, 1
Armour, 1
Cattell and Poultrie:
Neat Cattell, 1
Poultrie, 14
Houses:
House, 1[6]

For the purposes of this paper, only information relevant to the persons has been utilized; no attempt has been made to process the prop-

[5] Wesley Frank Craven, *Dissolution of the Virginia Company: The Failure of a Colonial Experiment* (New York, 1932), 81, 214-220.

[6] Hotten, ed., *Original Lists,* 212; Jester and Hiden, eds., *Adventurers of Purse and Person,* 16-17.

erty holdings. By careful handling of the data it is possible in most cases to derive nine separate pieces of information about each person: name, age (omitted for Thomas and Ann Chapman but often recorded in other instances), sex, race, arrival date, place of birth (England, Europe, or Virginia), place of residence in Virginia (listed in the margin of the *Muster* sheets), social position (i.e., some titles such as "Mr." are given), and household or family status. Although the total census is small —only 1,218 persons are named—the number of pieces of information usually available for each made it helpful to execute the tabulations by computer.[7]

The format of the *Muster* lends itself easily to arithmetical analysis, but there are two problems which preclude attaining numerical perfection. One is that although the original survey was most probably carried out door-to-door, the document as we now have it is clearly a copy of whatever notes were originally made by the census taker.[8] This copying introduces the problems of alterations in or loss of the original material. The existence of alterations and miscopying can be spotted on occasion. For example, one small section of the document represents the copying for a second time of material enumerated earlier.[9] The clerk seems to have realized his error rather quickly, abruptly dropping the "muster" on which he was then working. Rather than tearing off or crossing out the duplicated section, however, the clerk proceeded without any notation of what he had done. Internal contradictions in shipping dates are annoyingly frequent and may also represent clerical errors.[10]

[7] The system used was *Data Text,* a pre-packaged series of programs developed by the Department of Social Relations and Sociology at Harvard University. The accompanying manual is David J. Armor and Arthur S. Crouch, *The Data-Text Primer: An Introduction to Computerized Social Data Analysis Using the Data-Text System* (New York, 1971).

[8] Examination of the manuscript on microfilm indicates that the document is in neat clerk's hand. It is possible that the copy may have been made by one person although it is conceivable that two may have been involved.

[9] This curious flaw in the manuscript has not brought comment from any of the editors. The duplications occur in Mr. Daniel Gookin's Muster. See Hotten, ed., *Original Lists,* 243, 254; Jester and Hiden, eds., *Adventurers of Purse and Person,* 48, 59.

[10] After careful examination of all the discrepant dates it seemed most appropriate to handle them as follows: (1) where it was possible to ascribe the difference to the gap between Old and New Style calendars, the New Style date was used and no record of error or alteration was entered on the computer cards; (2) where the

That the currently available *Muster* is a copy also raises the problem of possible losses of material. One can attempt to assess the degree of loss by comparing the *Muster* with a *List of the Living and the Dead* drawn up in 1623/4 in the wake of the Indian massacre of March 1622.[11] In terms of gross numbers the *Muster* and the *List* are reasonably harmonious, allowing both for in-migration and mortality. However, Edmund S. Morgan, who has made a name-by-name comparison of the two documents, estimates that the losses from the *List* may run as high as 20 percent while those from the *Muster* may be around 10 percent.[12] Even modern censuses do not achieve total accuracy so that the existence of some loss in a seventeenth-century document cannot be too startling. For the purposes of this analysis these losses are probably of minimal importance, for the objective is not to trace particular individuals but to examine the configuration of a population. The degree of internal consistency within the document makes it highly probable that if we can never know the precise size of the total population, we do know the general proportions of its composition quite accurately.

The second area of difficulty is introduced by the process of analysis itself. Despite the initial appearance of the document as a straightforward list, in transposing data to computer cards one is repeatedly forced to make interpretive decisions. Shipping dates are contradictory within the document, discrepant with Company records, or simply omitted. Marital status, frequently given explicitly, is on other occasions omitted.[13] Interpretive decisions are unavoidable, even at the arithmetic level,

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date as given in the manuscripts seemed impossible, the "correct" date was entered. However, a "z" was entered before the date to indicate that it was not the date given in the manuscript; (3) there were sections of the *Muster* where ship names were entered, but dates were omitted. If these could be ascertained from other sources, dates were recorded, preceded by an "x" to indicate that the manuscript lacked dating.

[11] Hotten, ed., *Original Lists,* 169-189. The *List* includes 1,292 living persons, the *Muster* 1,218 living and 115 dead since 1624. Approximately 400 persons left England during 1623, and although we do not know the arrival dates, the departure dates listed suggest that many should have landed before the 1624 *List* was compiled. Thus the figures for the *List* and the *Muster* are reasonably harmonious. For estimates of yearly migration to Virginia, see Irene W. D. Hecht, "The Virginia Colony, 1607-1640: A Study in Frontier Growth" (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1969), Appendix II.

[12] Edmund S. Morgan, "The First American Boom: Virginia 1618 to 1630," *WMQ,* 3d Ser., XXVIII (1971), 170, n.4.

[13] See n. 10 for the handling of shipping dates. The problem of marital status

and it is wise to recognize that these could introduce slightly different final results were two different historians to attempt to execute the same task.

II

The first step in analyzing the *Muster* involves tabulating the basic demographic information it contains. The results confirm what one would have guessed: the Jamestown population of 1625 was predominantly male, young, and European-born.

Of the 1,218 persons listed,[14] more than three-fourths were males. By actual count there were 934 males (76.7 percent) and 270 females

arose because there were 80 instances (40 pairs) where a male and a female having the same surname appeared sequentially in a given muster without being identified as man and wife. In the 254 other cases there was some indication, explicit or implicit, that the persons listed were married. It seems likely that the discrepancy was produced by the differing methods of the several census takers, since "probable marriages" were not scattered haphazardly through the census, but rather were clumped in the latter sections. It is possible the recorder may have assumed that the marital relationship was so obvious as to make further explanation redundant. Although the probability seems high that these were married couples, it has seemed advisable in the absence of certainty to handle these 80 individuals as a separate category.

[14] The simplest possible operation would seem to be that of making a head count of the number of people in the census, yet this most basic of maneuvers has some decided complications. Wesley Frank Craven, *White, Red, and Black: The Seventeenth-Century Virginian* (Charlottesville, Va., 1971), 30, n.6, gives the figure 1,232. The discrepancy apparently arises from three double counts: (1) "Mr. Alnutt and his servant here Planted reconed before in the Muster of James Cittie," who is indeed listed earlier; (2) "Mr. Burrows and six of his men which are planted heare are reconed, with theire armes etc. at James Cittie," and they are; (3) the duplication of the Gookin Muster, which survived as a complete listing. See Hotten, ed., *Original Lists,* 225, 230, 231, 254, and Jester and Hiden, eds., *Adventurers of Purse and Person,* 59. Even the figure 1,218 which has been arrived at with great care, may be off by 2, for it is highly probable that Edward Bennett was not actually in residence in 1625, and Daniel Gookin definitely was not. In both cases, although these men's names appear as heads of musters, they are not enumerated in the lists which follow. Biographical descriptions given in Jester and Hiden, eds., *Adventurers of Purse and Person,* 90-91, 181-182, suggest that these two men were in England in 1625. In the case of Gookin that speculation is confirmed in Frederick W. Gookin, *Daniel Gookin, 1612-1687* (Chicago, 1912), 49. Percentage calculations, however, are based upon the figure 1,218 unless otherwise specified.

(22.1 percent), plus 14 persons (1.2 percent) unidentifiable by sex because of the omission of a first name. There are two striking features in the pattern of age distribution: the preponderance of young people generally and the unusually large number who were in their twenties. Table I indicates that 76.1 percent of those whose age can be determined were under thirty, while 46.9 percent of the total fell within the decile from twenty to twenty-nine. At the same time the table reveals a marked difference in the age distribution of males and females. The largest group of females falls in the years below fourteen and the next largest between twenty and twenty-four, with females totally unrepresented above the age of thirty-nine.

TABLE I
AGE PROFILE OF VIRGINIA SOCIETY, 1625

	Men		*Women*		*Total*	
Age	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
0–14	72	11.0	59	45.4	131	16.7
15–19	92	14.1	6	4.6	98	12.5
20–24	215	32.9	33	25.4	248	31.6
25–29	105	16.1	15	11.5	120	15.3
30–34	66	10.0	11	8.5	77	9.8
35–39	41	6.3	6	4.6	47	6.0
40–44	48	7.3	0	0	48	6.1
45–49	7	1.1	0	0	7	1.0
50 and Over	8	1.2	0	0	8	1.0
Total	654	100.0	130	100.0	784	100.0

Racially the colony was at this time overwhelmingly white. The twenty-three Negroes and two Indians listed constituted only a minuscule 2.2 percent of the *Muster's* population. The inhabitants were, as one would expect at this early stage of settlement, overwhelmingly nonindigenous. Of the total of 1,218, it is possible to establish that 1,085 (89.1 percent) were of English or European birth, while only 78 (6.4 percent) were children who were certainly born in Virginia. There are, however, 55 cases in which it is impossible to identify the place of birth, though 21 are children who could conceivably have been born in the

colony. Even including them among the native-born would make only 99 (8.2 percent) of the white population indigenous. Two Indians and one of two Negro children were also American born, bringing the indigenous population of Jamestown to a possible 102 (8.4 percent).

Of the children fourteen years of age and younger in 1625, however, at least 51.9 percent and possibly as many as 75.5 percent (if the twenty-one children whose birthplace is unclear were actually born in the colony) were Virginians. The implications are twofold. First, if at least half the youngsters were born in the New World, it enhances the probability that families were formed after rather than prior to migration, a conclusion which is highly compatible with what we know about the migratory process itself. Secondly, indigenous reproduction was beginning to establish a nucleus in the colony, although its small size suggests that the transition from an imported to a native population would be slow.

In 1625 Virginia was divided into four areas referred to as "corporations": Henrico, James City, Charles City, and Elizabeth City.[15] With the exception of Henrico each corporation encompassed a number of separate settlements. From Table II one can perceive several facets of population distribution. The Corporation of James City was home for nearly half the inhabitants (44.4 percent). The two settlements with the largest concentration of persons were Elizabeth City with 20.9 percent and James City with 10.3 percent. The larger settlements were concentrated in Charles City and Elizabeth City corporations, whereas James City Corporation had more settlements but, except for James City itself, these were smaller in size.

Probing the *Muster* beyond the data for age, sex, race, and birthplace enables one to penetrate some additional characteristics of early Virginia society. Perhaps most distinctive in 1625 was the existence of three levels of social organization. One was the "muster," an entity which is clearly identified by the use of the word, as for example in the "Muster of Thomas Chapman" cited earlier.[16] The 187 musters varied in size ranging from 34 one-man musters to one that encompassed 70 individuals.

[15] Charles E. Hatch, Jr., *The First Seventeen Years Virginia: 1607-1624* (Williamsburg, Va., 1957), 32-109, provides a very helpful index of settlements and a map.

[16] See above, p. 67.

TABLE II

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF VIRGINIA'S POPULATION, 1625

Corporation	*Settlement*	*No. of Persons*	*No. of Persons in Corporation*	*% of Population*
Henrico	College Land	22	22	1.8
Charles City	Charles City	44		
	West and Shirley Hundred	61		
	Jordan's Journey	56		
	Chapelains Choice	17		
	Piersey's Hundred	57		
			235	19.3
James City	Paspahegh	30		
	Governor's Plantation at Paspahegh	11		
	The Main	29		
	Dr. Pott's	8		
	James City	125		(10.3)
	James Island	51		
	Neck of Land, James City	16		
	Archer's Hope	14		
	Burrows Mount	7		
	Paces-Paines	14		
	Smith's Plantation	10		
	Blaney's	15		
	Matthew's Plantation	25		
	Crowder's Plantation	6		
	Treasurer's Plantation	18		
	Treasurer's, Jamestown	22		
	Hogg Island	53		
	Martin's Hundred	26		
	Mulberry Island	29		
	Warrasqueoc	31		
			540	44.4
Elizabeth City	Newport News	20		
	Elizabeth City	255		(20.9)
	Company Land, Elizabeth City	93		
	Eastern Shore	51		
			419	34.5
Total			1,216[a]	100.0

[a] Edward Bennett and Daniel Gookin were omitted. See note 14.

Most musters were headed by one person although there were eight cases where two men shared this responsibility. As one would expect, women rarely figured as muster heads. Four widows and one young woman, aged twenty, were so listed, and a man and a woman jointly headed one muster.

Although the socially privileged were most likely to be muster heads, the majority were indistinguishable from the rest of the colony's population. As Table III indicates, only 46 of 191 muster heads bore a distinguishing social title. These 46, however, represented the bulk of persons with social titles, of whom there were 62 in all. Among the 16 who were titled but not muster heads, 2 were "Mr." Argall Yeardley, aged four, and "Mr." Francis Yeardley, aged one, and 8 women who were married to muster heads. Thus in only 6 cases did the socially titled fail to become muster heads.

TABLE III

SOCIAL TITLES IN TOTAL CENSUS AND FOR MUSTER HEADS

Social Title	*No. in Census with Title*	*No. as a Muster Head*
Titles denoting respect (Mr., Rev., Dr.)	26	19
Sgt.	2	2
Sir	2	2
Mrs., Lady	11	3
Capt., Lt., Ensign	21	20
Total	62	46

In some cases the use of the word "muster" is less than transparent. As indicated in the *Oxford English Dictionary* the word is frequently used in reference to military affairs. Appearing as this document does on

the heels of a massacre, it may have been intended to have some meaning in terms of defense. In most cases, however, one could substitute "family" or "household" without in any way changing the makeup of the lists. There are seven cases, however, where there is no muster head, and in these cases it seems the muster was primarily a geographic specification, as for example "the Muster of the Inhabitants of the Colledge-Land in Virginia," which included fifteen separate households. On the other hand, there are musters, such as "the Muster of Capt. Roger Smith's Men Over Ye Water," which seem to be economic units, the persons in that muster being included because of their dependent relationship to Smith.[17]

The second level of social organization was the household. In terms of the census a household may best be defined as a group of people sharing in some way a common store of provisions and property. Within the Virginia *Muster* the household groups can be identified on the basis of the inventory of goods that appears following the enumeration of persons. Frequently, as in the Chapman example cited previously, muster and household were one and the same; however, there are also instances where households constituted subdivisions of a muster. Thus the number of households recorded in the census is larger than the number of musters.

Household size in Virginia in 1625 showed considerable variation. (See Table IV.) Although the average size of a household was 3.9 persons, sizes ranged from one to thirty-six, and approximately half the population was located in households of five or less.

About one-third of the households included at least one servant. Table V enumerates servants by type and sex and makes clear that although there were Negro servants as well as female servants, the overwhelming majority in 1625 were white males. It is equally clear that the presence of hired servants was a rarity.

Two features of Table VI which illustrate the distribution of servants among the various households are striking. The first is that half the households which had servants had only one or two. The other is that more than half the servants were concentrated in fourteen house-

[17] Hotten, ed., *Original Lists,* 210, 223, and Jester and Hiden, eds., *Adventurers of Purse and Person,* 5, 28.

TABLE IV
HOUSEHOLD SIZE IN VIRGINIA, 1625

No. of Persons per Household	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	12
No. of Households	86	61	47	34	23	9	15	10	5	2	1
Total No. of Individuals	86	122	141	136	115	54	105	80	45	20	12

No. of Persons per Household	13	15	16	18	21	22	25	29	36	Total
No. of Households	3	5	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	309
Total No. of Individuals	39	75	16	18	42	22	25	29	36	1,218

TABLE V
SERVANTS IN VIRGINIA, 1625

	Males	*Females*	*Unknown*	*Total*
Negroes	13	9	1	23
Indians	1			1
Hired Servants	3			3
White Servants	437	43		480
Total	454	52	1	507

holds which represented no more than 4.5 percent of all the households. In other words, the distribution of servants was very uneven.

The propensity of servants to be concentrated among a restricted number of households is even more evident in the case of the Negroes. As we see from Table VII fifteen Negroes (65.2 percent) were divided among two households, while the remainder—eight—were spread through five additional households. It is also noteworthy that with but two exceptions all Negroes were located with heads of households who were among the fourteen with the greatest total number of servants.

TABLE VI
DISTRIBUTION OF SERVANTS IN HOUSEHOLD, 1625

No. of Servants in Household	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	10	12	13
No. of Households	23	23	11	9	6	6	2	2	2	1
Total No. of Servants	23	46	33	36	30	36	14	20	24	13

No. of Servants in Household	14	15	16	17	20	23	36	40	Total
No. of Households	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	96
Total No. of Servants	14	15	16	68	20	23	36	40	507

TABLE VII

DISTRIBUTION OF NEGRO SERVANTS OR SLAVES IN VIRGINIA, 1625

Muster	*Total No. of Servants*	*Negro Servants or Slaves*			
		Male	*Female*	*Child*	*Total*
A. Piersey	40	4	2	1	7
G. Yeardley	36	3	5	0	8
W. Tucker	18	1	1	1	3
W. Pierce	17	0	1	0	1
E. Bennett	12	1	1	0	2
F. West[a]	6	1	0	0	1
R. Kingsmill[a]	4	1	0	0	1
Total	133	11	10	2	23

[a] Not major servant holders.

A review of biographical information which is available for the major servant-owners reveals that these men either held positions of responsibility in the Company or maintained personally advantageous connections with it. Edward Bennett was a London merchant who owned a fleet of vessels which traded with Virginia. Although in 1625 he was listed with but 12 men, Bennett is said to have sent 120 to Jamestown in 1622. Dr. John Pott, also with 12 servants, was the Company physician. Sir George Yeardley, who had 36 servants, had been governor from 1618 to 1621. Abraham Piersey, listed with 40 servants, was the Company's cape merchant. Daniel Gookin, who ferried cattle from Ireland to Virginia, though not resident in the colony in 1625, had 20 servants at Newport News. George Sandys's connections with the Virginia Company were likewise close. His brother, Sir Edwin, was the Company's treasurer in London, and George was appointed to the same post in Virginia in 1621. At the time of the census he had 16 adult servants at the Treasurer's Plantation. Capt. Samuel Mathews, who arrived in Virginia in 1622, served on the Council from 1623 to 1625. At the time of the census he had 23 servants with him at Jamestown. Capt. William Pierce, with 17 servants, had been Captain of the Guard and

Commander of Jamestown since 1623.[18] Capt. William Tucker's unsavory exploits as Company envoy to the Pamunkeys have been described by Morgan. Tucker's 17 servants place him statistically among the servant-rich. Of Capt. William Eppes (13 servants), Sgt. William Barry (15 servants), Mr. Edward Blaney (17 servants), and Capt. Roger Smith (14 servants) little is known beyond the fact the first two were Company agents.[19]

The census also gives some interesting insight into some of the organizational aspects of these households with numerous servants. In seven of the fourteen cases described above, servants were located in two places, James City and an outlying plantation.[20] In six of these cases a small group of servants was stationed at James City (where the muster head actually resided), while the majority were located at an outlying plantation. Only Sir George Yeardley reversed that pattern, maintaining most of his servants in James City. Modest as it may have been in 1625, James City was nonetheless the colony's social and political hub, its leaders maintaining their residences there complete with maid servants, while the work went on at some greater distance.

In addition the *Muster* reflects a strong measure of social bias in housing. The sequential appearance of Governor Wyatt, ex-Governor

[18] For biographical information on these men, see Jester and Hiden, eds., *Adventurers of Purse and Person, passim.* In addition to these 14 persons, Morgan included Ralph Hamor in his list of "winners in the servant sweepstake"; see Morgan, "Virginia 1618 to 1630," *WMQ,* 3d Ser., XXVIII (1971), 188. Statistically the total listing of servants divides into two nearly equal parts at 10 servants per household. For this reason Hamor is omitted here.

[19] Morgan, "Virginia 1618 to 1630," *WMQ,* 3d Ser., XXVIII (1971), 189, n. 85, 190. There are also some discrepancies in the numbers of servants cited. For example, Morgan lists William Pierce with 13, located at Mulberry Island; however, Pierce also had 4 servants in James City, making his total 17. For George Sandys, Morgan lists 37 servants. In the *Muster* only 16 are specifically designated as servants. The rest are listed as "those that live in Mr. Treasurer's Plantation." Morgan's conclusion that these, too, were servants is probably correct. However, in an effort to follow the designation used in the *Muster* these persons have been categorized in this study as "social status undefined." In the case of Yeardley, Morgan arrives at 39 servants by including 3 persons listed as "Dwellers." The figure used here for Yeardley is 36. See Hotten, ed., *Original Lists,* 222, 224, 234-235, 238, 240-241, and Jester and Hiden, eds., *Adventures of Purse and Person,* 27, 29, 39-40, 42-43, 44-45.

[20] This is true for Pott, Pierce, Wyatt, Yeardley, Piersey, Blaney, and Smith.

Yeardley, Dr. John Pott, Capt. Roger Smith, Capt. Ralph Hamor, Capt. William Pierce, Abraham Piersey, and Mr. Edward Blaney reflects quite accurately the actual housing arrangements at Jamestown. The locations of all but Piersey have been established, and it so happens that without exception all lived in "New Town." Indeed some held adjacent properties, as is suggested by the muster arrangement. These affluent residents were not the sole population of New Town (they represent about a half of the identified locations), but it is remarkable to see that without exception these persons lived in the same area of Jamestown.[21]

The third level of social organization reflected in the census is that of the family. Everyone in the census belonged to a muster and to a household. Less than half had family with them in the colony. Of the 1,218 persons listed in the *Muster,* 483 (40 percent) had relatives of some sort, the most frequent relationship being that of husband and wife. A maximum of 334 persons were married, 99 were children who had identifiable relatives, 16 colonists were widowed persons with children, 7 Virginians were adult siblings, and 26 were related in a variety of ways ranging from in-laws to miscellaneous children who may have been related to the adults with whom they lived.[22]

The 334 married persons fall into three groups. There are those who, as far as we know, were married for the first time. These numbered 226 persons. In addition, there were 28 who were partners in marriages which for at least one of the parties represented a second or perhaps even a third marriage. It has been possible to isolate these cases in the musters which have children listed as "His" or "Hers" (as distinct from theirs).

[21] Hotten, ed., *Original Lists,* 219-224; Jester and Hiden, eds., *Adventurers of Purse and Person,* 26-29; Henry Chandlee Forman, *Jamestown and St. Mary's: Buried Cities of Romance* (Baltimore, 1938), 63-64; Samuel H. Yonge, *The Site of Old "James Towne," 1607-1698: A Brief Historical and Topographical Sketch of the First American Metropolis* (Richmond, 1907), 56-57.

[22] It should be noted that the widowed are traceable only if they have a child. It is possible and in fact probable that there were others who had lost mates and in the process all family connections in Virginia. Also it should be noted that only male siblings are traceable. If females have the same name, they have been recorded as probable wives. If they lost their maiden names through marriage, the *Muster* furnishes no way of linking adult male-female siblings. Twenty-three "miscellaneous" children who lived with adults could have been orphans whose mothers had remarried.

That this method was not a quaint idiosyncracy of recording is confirmed by the fact that children labeled "Hers" always bear a different surname from the mother, who has quite evidently remarried. Finally, there are 80 persons who were probably married.[23]

The nuclear family—husband, wife, and, on occasion, children—was virtually the sole basis of family life as it existed in Virginia. It is also clear that only a minority of the population had family ties within the colony. Who were the people who were so distinguished? Muster heads were more prone to marry, their nuptiality rate being slightly higher than that of the population in general. Whereas a maximum of 334 persons (30.7 percent) were married out of that part of the population who by age could be considered marriageable (i.e., fifteen and over), 42.2 percent of the male muster heads were married.

With the severe imbalance between the number of males and the number of females one might assume that there would be few single marriageable women, but this is not as uniformly true as one might expect. Forty-three women twenty or older were not married. Recent arrival does not explain their spinsterhood, for thirty-nine had been in the colony since at least 1622. The other four had arrived sometime during 1624. Nine should have been highly marriageable, seven being widows, one an uncategorized female, and one a head of a household. Since four of the widows had lost their spouses at least one year earlier, it seems that women were not necessarily inclined to rush to the altar despite the stresses of frontier existence.

The characteristic the unmarried women shared most frequently was that of being servants. Thirty-four fell in that category, 27 being white and 7 Negro. English social practice of the time assumed that servants did not marry until their period of service was completed.[24] However, in Virginia among the 334 married persons 24 were servants. Not only is that figure a surprise in the context of English practice, but an examination of the 1624 *List* also reveals that 6 of these couples had apparently been married for at least a year. One was a Negro couple,

[23] See n. 13.

[24] Laslett, "The Study of Social Structure," in Wrigley, ed., *An Introduction to English Historical Demography*, 201.

Anthony and Isabel, who by 1625 had a child named William.[25] English custom was certainly violated by these servant marriages, but, in view of the sex ratio, what is surprising is not that Old World traditions were violated, but that they were so frequently observed.

It is perhaps equally surprising to find that social structure and nuptiality do not reflect any clear pattern. Muster heads were married somewhat more frequently than the population at large, but not so frequently that one could assume that if a man was a muster head, he was probably married. Servants could and did marry, but the number of unmarried female servants indicates that English social practice in this case was more often accepted than rejected.

When one makes length of residence the key variable in determining family status, a pattern does emerge. What is striking is that in contrast to the nuptiality rate for all the colony's eligible adults, which was no more than 30.7 percent, 70.3 percent of those who arrived between 1607 and 1616 and who were still living in 1625 were married. (See Table VIII.) The percentages are, of course, calculated with small numbers and are therefore subject to exaggeration. Nevertheless it does appear to be true that the early arrivals were more apt to have married and adopted a family-oriented form of social organization. Insofar as current research reveals that the nuclear family was basic in the organization of English

[25] The servant couples listed as married in 1623/4 are Joan and Wassell Rayner, Margaret and Thomas Gray, and Alice and Christopher Lawson; see Hotten, ed., *Original Lists,* 174-176, 226, 228, 232. In addition, though not listed as man and wife in 1623, the following appear in both the 1624 *List* and the 1625 *Muster:* Ann and Roger Thompson, Elizabeth and Richard Arrundell, and Isabel and Anthony (Negro); see *ibid.,* 172-173, 183-184, 222, 244, and Jester and Hiden, eds., *Adventurers of Purse and Person,* 27, 49. Four other servant couples appear in the *Muster* listed as man and wife: Elizabeth and Maximilian Stone, "Wife" and John Day, Ann and Hugh Hughs, and Abigail and Richard Atkins. Two other pairs appear sequentially but are not explicitly identified as man and wife: Mary and John Morris, and Rebecca and Robert Browne. See *ibid.,* 42-44, 49, 57, and Hotten, ed., *Original Lists,* 238, 240, 244, 252. Hugh Hughs, John Morris, and Robert Browne are listed in 1624. It appears possible that Ann Window who is listed in the same grouping with Hugh Hughs might be the Ann Hughs of 1625, and that the Mary Mounday of 1624 may be the Mary Morris of 1625. Elizabeth Stone, although she is said in the census to have arrived in 1621, is not traceable in the 1623/4 *List.* Rebecca Browne did not arrive until 1624.

TABLE VIII
SUMMARY OF ARRIVALS: FAMILY STATUS

Year of Arrival	*No. Living in 1625*	*No. Married*	*% Married*
1607	3	2	66.6
1608	8	5	62.5
1609	7	4	57.1
1610	27	19	70.4
1611	27	23	85.2
1612	3	3	100.0
1613	7	6	85.6
1614	0	0	0
1615	2	0	0
1616	17	9	52.9
Total	101	71	70.3

society,[26] it would appear that what Virginians sought to do, given time, was to resume the social patterns with which they were familiar.

The history of family structure in Virginia had some noteworthy idiosyncracies in 1625. In the first place, it appears that families had little to do with the initial process of peopling the colony. Of the 1,218 listed in the *Muster* only 56 can be identified as having arrived in some sort of a familial group. In 44 cases a husband and wife came together, in 8 they brought a child with them, and in 4 a wife and child travelled together.

Furthermore, when families were formed they still remained small

TABLE IX
NUMBER OF CHILDREN PER FAMILY, 1625

						Total
No. of Children	0	1	2	3	4	122
No. of Families	102	62[a]	17	6	2	189

[a] Two are Negro mothers, one with her husband and the other without.

[26] Laslett and Harrison, "Clayworth and Cogenhoe," in Bell and Ollard, eds., *Historical Essays 1660-1750*, 166-168.

in 1625. As Table IX demonstrates, 102 married or probably married couples were childless, which means 61.1 percent of families presumably prepared to bear children had failed to produce surviving offspring by 1625. Of those who had children, 62 had one, 17 had two, 6 had three, and 2 had four. The small number of children is further emphasized when one notes that of the six families with three children, one had been augmented to that number by two orphaned relatives, and two were families where parents had remarried and had children by their preceding marriages. Similarly, one of the two families with four children was composed of parents with two children of their own and two apparently unrelated youngsters. In other words, it was unusual for a given set of parents to have more than a child or two of their own, and the larger number, in fact, remained childless.

The record of marital relationships, the small family size that still prevailed in 1625, and the striking history of what happened to children in the colony combine to suggest how strong was the tendency toward disruption of the family in the early years of the colony. With 71.4 percent of the adults unmarried, the total number of married persons was in any event small, and of those married at least 46 (13.2 percent) had lost a mate. Thirty of these, however, subsequently remarried. For children the security of hearth and home remained especially precarious. Of 122 persons identified in the census as children, only 54 (44.3 percent) had both parents living. The other 68 (55.7 percent) had all suffered some form of familial disruption. Forty (32.8 percent) had lost one parent, 5 (4.1 percent) had no surviving parents and were living with kin, and 23 (18.8 percent) had no identifiable living relatives at all. The census also reveals another significant feature of the life of the first children of the colony. The count of 122 children excludes 20 youngsters aged ten to fourteen whom we would classify as children but who in the *Muster* were listed simply as servants. Such material suggests that childhood in the seventeenth century was more a social status than a biological stage of development, the very poor or orphaned being expected to bear adult responsibilities at a very early age. If the Virginia data are in any way representative, childhood ended by age ten for the less privileged.[27]

[27] For an example of the listing of children with their parents, see "Antoney Negro: Isabell Negro: and William theire child Baptised." Jester and Hiden, eds., *Adventurers of Purse and Person,* 49; Hotten, ed., *Original Lists,* 244. In contrast

III

The information that can be derived from the census is interesting in and of itself; however, the material also has significance within a broader context. What light does it throw on later Virginia history and how does it relate both to the English world from which this population emigrated and to the colonial world of which Virginia was a part? In view of the special limitation of a single census and the peculiarity of the society which it depicted, one needs to assess with care the conclusions that one may draw. When one finds a society in which men so overwhelmingly outnumbered women, where almost half the population was twenty to twenty-nine years old, where the normal life of the family was severely limited, and in which social disruption seems to have been rampant, one is hesitant to see it as any sort of norm. Yet the most recent work by Wesley Frank Craven makes it appear that what we find in the census may be closer to the normal pattern of seventeenth-century Virginia than we might have thought. Using the patent records as a source on seventeenth-century migration, Craven found that men outnumbered women throughout the century.[28] We already knew from materials examined by Mildred Campbell that those who arrived in Virginia continued primarily to be young persons probably in their early twenties.[29] Measured against these data, the long-range implications of the *Muster* grow in importance. If indeed migration continued to be dominated by young male servants we can expect the patterns visible in the *Muster* to be perpetuated through much of the seventeenth century. Sex imbalance would reduce the possibility of family formation, and restrictions on servant marriages would further reduce actual nuptiality. Those who survived and remained in Virginia, assuming the *Muster* pattern held, would in due course marry, settle

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to servant children, there are a number of instances in which the sons and daughters of persons of higher social status continued to be listed as children beyond the age of 14, which suggests that in the 17th century childhood may have been more a social status than a biological stage of development.

[28] Craven, *White, Red, and Black*, 27,

[29] Mildred Campbell, "Social Origins of Some Early Americans," in James Morton Smith, ed., *Seventeenth-Century America: Essays in Colonial History* (Chapel Hill, 1959), 74.

down, and produce families, probably of modest size.[30] Virginia's population would eventually shift from foreign-born to native-born and from nonfamily to family oriented, but the transformations would be slower than for colonies whose founding populations had a less skewed age and sex structure.[31]

One must also expect these demographic patterns to have implications for the social and political evolution of the colony. It would seem plausible that the particular population structure would enhance the power of a small, dominant elite, drawing its strength either from its status in Virginia based on family or from the prestige of social position brought from England. Indeed this is the very pattern described by Bernard Bailyn.[32] One can now have some sense of the demographic mechanisms which contributed to that pattern.

The lag in the establishment of an indigenous population in Virginia may also have simplified the substitution of black labor for white. If indeed Craven is correct in maintaining that Virginia's population was predominantly nonindigenous throughout the seventeenth century and if that migrant population was mostly made up of young males, one would expect little intracolony opposition to the substitution of one

[30] One faces the problem of determining whether the small number of children is a reflection of the peculiarities of the census or whether it is an indication of a long-term trend in family structure in Virginia. A modest attempt has been made to deal with that problem by looking at the genealogical records provided in the Jester and Hiden edition of the *Muster,* which includes a genealogy of the descendants of the 1625 colony through the fourth generation. Where it has been possible to trace descendants, it is remarkable to see how enduring was the pattern of small family size. Of 77 persons who can be traced into the second generation, 3 had no children, 17 had one, 24 had two, 19 had three, 6 had four, 5 had five, and 3 had six. Again we find a dominance of families with one or two children (in this case half the families are so constituted). The major variation is in the number of families with three children, who now accounted for a quarter of all families. One will need to trace the family histories of subsequent arrivals, for again the immigrants of Virginia's early years may have been an atypical group. However, whatever further work is undertaken in Virginia will need to start with the premise that family structure there was far different from that of New England, and that its characteristic stamp was that of small family size.

[31] For example, the rapidity of indigenous population growth in Massachusetts as traced in a study like Greven's *Four Generations* cannot be contemplated with the skewed sex pyramid of Virginia.

[32] Bernard Bailyn, "Politics and Social Structure in Virginia," in Smith, ed., *Seventeenth-Century America,* 90-115.

form of labor for another. The demographic situation does not furnish a comprehensive explanation of the shift to slave labor, which began before the end of the seventeenth century, but it may indeed be one important component.

The studies that Peter Laslett has made of Clayworth, Cogenhoe, and Ealing provide a basis for comparing Virginia's population with that of the parent society. To be sure, one cannot trace direct derivations since we have no way of knowing whether any of the Virginians in the *Muster* came from any of these particular English communities. What one can do, however, is to compare general patterns. Examination of Laslett's work confirms that Virginia was demographically distinctive. The preponderance of males and the age bulge do not in any way reflect the structure of the parent society.[33] Virginia's patterns existed because the colony drew upon a particular segment of English society. The ensuing rarity of family organization follows from Virginia's demographic idiosyncracies and is in no way a duplication of English practice. Similarly the particular complexities of social organization into family, household, and muster should be seen as an effort of a group of people attempting to cope with a new environment. The vocabulary may have been English, but the reality it represented was created by New World conditions.

On the other hand Laslett's studies also indicate that there is a danger of exaggerating the degree of social disruption experienced in Virginia. One cannot say that England represented social stability and Virginia social chaos, for in some instances the resemblance between Jamestown and Laslett's communities of Clayworth and Cogenhoe are startling. For example, we must find it appalling that more than half of Virginia's children were at least partially orphaned. Yet Laslett found 28 percent of Clayworth's children had lost at least one parent. Marriages were perhaps even more frequently disrupted in Stuart England than in Virginia. Laslett estimates that about one-third of all marriages represented second or subsequent marriages.[34] The *Muster* does not permit

[33] Laslett, "Study of Social Structure," in Wrigley, ed., *An Introduction to English Historical Demography,* Table 25, 194.

[34] Laslett and Harrison, "Clayworth and Cogenhoe," in Bell and Ollard, eds., *Historical Essays 1660-1750,* 165.

a thorough assessment of this issue, but to the degree that remarriages can be tabulated these represented only 12.6 percent of Virginia's couples.

Any temptation to view Virginia as a model for the effects of colonization on Englishmen generally will be dispelled by comparing the colony's experience with that of Bristol, Rhode Island, and Barbados. John Demos's study of Bristol rests on a 1689 census and Richard Dunn's work on Barbados on one that dates from 1680, and hence the stage of colonial development is by no means identical in the three instances.[35] Yet the comparison is useful, not for its statistical precision but for its indication of some general patterns of development.

Demos's findings for Bristol make it possible to compare some aspects of Virginia's population structure and household organization with a seventeenth-century New England experience. Demos found that of the 421 persons in the Bristol community, 226 (53.7 percent) were children.[36] In Virginia, even if one were to count all persons nineteen and under as children, only 229 (29.9 percent of the population) would fall into this category. Actually, as we have seen, only 122 youngsters could in social terms be referred to as "children" living under some sort of family supervision. Although it is not possible to reduce the data to a precisely comparable form, it is clear that while children accounted for more than half the Bristol population, in Virginia they were at most a minority of little more than a quarter of the total. The family in Virginia as of 1625 played a less important role, whether our basis of comparison is old England or New.

Demos's material also provides the basis for some interesting social contrasts. Servants in Bristol accounted for 10.9 percent of the population whereas in Virginia they constituted at least 40.9 percent of the population. In terms of the percent of households with servants the experience of the two colonies is almost identical: 34.3 percent of Virginia's households included servants and 31.4 percent of Bristol's.[37] The distribution of servants was, however, quite different. Only two of Bristol's seventy

[35] Demos, "Families in Colonial Bristol," *WMQ*, 3d Ser., XXV (1968), 40-57; Dunn, "Barbados Census of 1680," *ibid.*, XXVI (1969), 3-30.

[36] Demos, "Families in Colonial Bristol," *ibid.*, XXV (1968), 43-44.

[37] *Ibid.*, 46.

households had a substantial number of servants (one household with eight servants and one with eleven). In Virginia, the fourteen men with the largest number of servants held from twelve to forty.

Household size in Virginia and Bristol was also very different. The most frequent household size for Bristol was four, five, or six persons,[38] while in Virginia it was one, two, or three. Again we find in Virginia a deemphasis of the family, both because of the frequency of bachelor households and also because household and family are not synonymous in Virginia as Demos found them to be in Bristol.

Barbados, however, presents some interesting demographic similarities to Virginia. (See Table X.) For example, although the proportion of childless couples was almost twice as large in Virginia as it was in Bridgetown, Barbados, the proportion of all married couples in these two colonies was almost identical (27.5 percent of the total population in Virginia, and 27.6 percent in Bridgetown).[39] One also finds a close resemblance in the proportion of the population made up of children, the widowed, and single householders. There appears to be a

TABLE X
POPULATION OF VIRGINIA, 1625, AND BARBADOS, 1680

	Virginia		*Barbados*	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Married Couples	86	14.1	231	16.6
Childless Couples	82	13.4	98	7.0
Children	122	10.0	330	11.9
Widowed	16	1.3	31	1.1
Single Householders	34	2.8	89	3.2
Servants and Slaves	499	40.9	1,678	60.2
Unknown	379	17.2	0	0
Total	1,218	100.0	2,786	100.0

[38] *Ibid.*, 44.
[39] Dunn, "Barbados Census of 1689," *ibid.*, XXVI (1969), 22.

TABLE XI

CHILDREN PER FAMILY—BRIDGETOWN, VIRGINIA, BRISTOL

		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
351 Families Bridgetown	No.	198	58	52	22	7	11	2	1	0	0	0	330
	%	56.4	16.5	15.1	6.3	2.0	3.1	0.6	0.3	0	0	0	100
189 Families Virginia	No.	102	62	17	6	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	122
	%	54.0	32.8	9.0	3.2	1.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100
69 Families Bristol	No.	7	10	11	12	9	8	6	4	1	0	1	226
	%	10.1	14.5	15.9	17.4	13.0	11.6	8.7	5.8	1.5	0	1.5	100

wide discrepancy in the proportions of servants and slaves, but in part the difference may be artificial since there is a significant part of the Virginia population in 1625 for which no social identification is provided and who may well have been servants.

Table XI, which provides comparison in the number of children and households in Virginia, Bristol, and Barbados, further emphasizes the similarity between Virginia and Barbados and the differences between them and Bristol. In both Barbados and Virginia childless couples were numerous, while in Bristol they were rare. The number of children per family was slightly greater in Barbados than Virginia, but again the most prominent difference lies between the two southern colonies and Bristol. In Bristol families were about equally likely to have one, two, three, or four children, whereas in Barbados and Virginia there was a marked tendency to have but one or two.

Inferring dynamic social patterns from a census which by its very nature presents a static picture is certainly hazardous. If it is combined with other sources, the hazards of inference are reduced and the static can become in part dynamic. Through the *Muster* one can perceive the implications of demographic patterns for social structure, an interaction of more than momentary interest, since migration patterns apparently continued to be much the same in terms of age, sex, and status. It also furnishes a glimpse of the nature of the changes wrought by migration upon Englishmen. In Virginia, at least, one of the most profound innovations must have been the breakdown of family structure. The disruption caused by mortality *per se* was probably less striking to the seventeenth-century emigrant than it is to us. The shattering of the family, on the other hand, may have been traumatic. As Laslett makes clear,[40] the English family maintained itself even if its individual members perished. This type of continuity seems to have vanished to a large degree in the Virginia of 1625. Restoration of family continuity in that setting would in all likelihood be painful and slow. Nor does the *Muster* permit one to see Virginia demographic developments as either a norm or a flight from a norm. Virginia was as different from New England in 1625 as it was to be at any later stage of colonial history.

[40] Laslett and Harrison, "Clayworth and Cogenhoe," in Bell and Ollard, eds., *Historical Essays 1660-1750*, 180.

The resemblances with Barbados on the other hand raise the possibility of a correlation between staple production and particular demographic patterns.[41] Certainly the development of both economic and demographic regional characteristics began very early. In short not only does the *Muster* provide an extraordinarily detailed view of the demographic basis of the social disruption experienced in Jamestown, but also it suggests some perspectives on Virginia's later history, the colony's relationship to England, and its place within the colonial world.

[41] Dunn characterized family life in Barbados as "stunted"; as late as 1680 "broken family life was still the rule." For more information on family life in Barbados, see Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves,* 325-334.